AMONG THE BASKET MAKERS.

A PRIMITIVE COMMUNITY ONLY PIFTS MILES FROM THE METROPOLIS.

Frugal but Contented Life Among the Ramape Mountains-Families Who Have Been Neighborn for a Century-The Rev. Mr. Gay's Appeal to the Charitable-The Basket Makers Resent Some of the Imputations Against Them.

The rugged mountain country of Rockland and Orange counties, a few miles west of the Hudson, is inhabited by people vastly different in character, appearance, and occupation, both from the people of the enterprising towns on the river side and the farming folk of the plains and valleys further back in the State, The region is a peculiar one, and its inhabi-tants are the outgrowth of its limitations. They earn their living chiefly by basket making and wood chopping. Their lives are so conditione 1 by their surroundings that they seldom care to venture into the vastly different country on either side of them, and their own country is so barren, rocky, and difficult of travel that neighboring people seldom enter it except



A PROSPEROUS FARMER'S HOME.

when necessity compels them to gross the of civilization to another. Thus, the mountain nen. as they are called, have lived their quiet unewentful lives within fifty miles or so of New York for a century or more, little known to the outside world, and knowing little of it except for the occasional newspapers that reach them and the news got in trading trips to the towns on the Hudson. They have attracted a little more attention just of late than ever before, through a curious controversy which has arisen between them and an Episcopal clergyman who runs three churches and a mission house for "fresh-air" city waifs at Tomkins Cove, on the Hudson, and a short time ago a Sun reporter went through the mountains and visited them in their own homes. He found them a curious and inter-



A BASKET MAKER.

The mountain district of Rockland and Orange counties is wild and monotonous in the extreme. The upper Palisades are its eastern boundary. From them the hills roll up rapidly higher and higher, culminating in the Ramapo range, and then slope backward to the farm lands a few miles to the west. There is little soil and no fertility. Small peaks, oddshaped rocky prominences, razor-backed hills and mountain ledges. pine-fringed slopes and steeps, all jumbled confusedly together, without suggestion of regularity, and mixed up with ravines. Leep valleys, mountain streams, and unexpected lakes and ponds, make up the entire region. It is a puzzling country. Winter or summer it is dreary, because of its never ending sameness. Nothing is easier than to lose oneself in its mazes, because there are no features of lan iscape of commanding prom-



LOG CABIN, BOARDED.

have been chopped off so many times that it has not anywhere the dignity of a single respectable patch of forest. To be well wooded, but the trees are fourth or fifth growth, and are rarely found large enough for the sawmill. But that makes no difference in the lumbering. There 's a neverfailing market for firewood at Haverstraw. where a thousand brick kilns with ever-gap-ing mouths are never satisfied. Indeed, there are not woodchoppers enough on the mountains to supply the enormous demands of these insatiable brick kilns, and wood has to be brought by river; and railroad from far-dis-



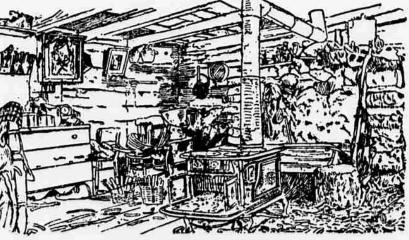
intervals as you get inside. They are the homes of the men who come are comportable, some of the minary. Farming is the progrest-paying industry in the mountains, and the farmers do not attempt to raise more out of the seasity soil than shough to raise more out of the seasity soil than shough to raise. He properly that the mountains and the seasity soil than shough to raise more out of the seasity soil than shough to raise more out of the seasity soil than shough to raise more out of the seasity soil than shough to raise more out of the seasity soil than shough to raise more out of the seasity soil than shough to raise more out of the seasity soil than shough to raise the season of the season



ST. JOHN'S MISSION.

the entire population. It you address the first many you chance to meet by the name of Conk many you chance to meet by the name of Conk The Conkin family is much the biggest and most profile of all. And go where you will throughout all the region you will find everybody rejuited in some way or other to everybody rejuited in the region you will she everybody rejuited in the profile of all the region you will not everybody the contract of the contract in the region of all the farmhouses.

And an all of comfort and contentment of the region of milk you have swallowed at a single draught. She asks the nows from town, and is interested in everyitem you retail her. This is a sample of all the farmhouses and basiest makers live you will have to go a little of from the main roads. The real lide of the country is presently you will have to go a little of from the main roads. The real lide of the country is presently you will have to go a little of from the main roads. The real lide of the country is a profile that the woods. Presently you will have to go a little of from the main roads. The real lide of the country is a profile of the country is a pro



INTERIOR OF A BASKET MAKER'S HUT.

INTERIOR OF ABSERT MARKS BUT.

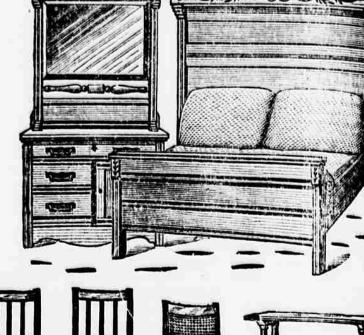
Side in and out with astoniching rapidity, and all the while the basket is turning on the State. The sound of the axis are breath froughten the mountain region in summer as well as winer, and the rocky mountain rocks are observed at many both face and all the while the basket is turning in summer as well as winer, and the rocky mountain rocks are observed at many both face and all the while the basket is turning in summer as well as winer, and the rocky mountain rocks are observed at many both face and all the while the basket is turning in the state of the state of

YN FURNITURE COMPANY

BONA FIDE BARGAINS







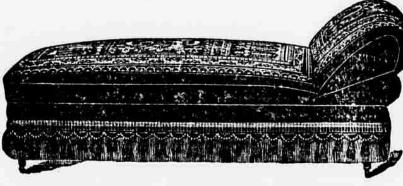


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ulated localities. Within a radius of two miles of this mission there are two schools besides this one, and there are many other schools. Everybody can read and write and cirber, at least, and many are pretty well educated. We get newspapers out here and people keep tolerably well informed as to what is going on in the world and the country. I hope you'll talk to everybody you meet and find out for your-



THE SCHOOL HOUSE,

self what a well-spoken. Intelligent people we are here. Things are very different now from tan years ago, you know. Mr. Gay describes tife basket makers of twenty years ago as those of to-day. Just take a look at the photographs he shows as samples of the homes of the people here. That log hut without windows hasn't been occupied for ten years. This other one here has been empty five years at least. That cave house he makes so much capital of is occupied by a man so lazy he wouldn't take the trouble to move, I have pleaded with that man several years, offered him work, but he won't work. Now I've given him up, excent I see that his family does not actually suffer. His is the only nome in the country that is a hole in the ground or a cave. Most of the other houses are built of logs, but they are all the warmer for that. They are just as good as dozens or hundreds of houses in any country community in the world, and infinitely better than many of the brickmakers' houses right in Haverstraw. As for the people, the men can always make from it to \$2 a day olyking cranberries, chopping wood, or making baskets. There's no excuse for any industrious man not making a very comfortable living. Of course, there are shiftless and lazy people here, as everywhere, and they, with the sick and unfortunate, are pitiably poor. But Mrs. Zimmerman don't let any-



JESSE JOHNSON'S HOUSE.

bedy suffer for lack of food or clothing. We attend to that, and there is no need of Ar. Gay troutiling himself. The people tell me they buy their clothes of Mr. Gay. They pay him in baskets. He gives them great bargains, they tell me, so that it pays them to dispose of part of their baskets to him rather than to send them to town and then buy clothes for cash. There is another statement that has been made in these articles that I do not thick Mr. Gay should a rmit. He was not the first to true the degree of the continuous countries of the first to true the first bound the first to true it is did lets of good no neight in those days of many cours ago when the needle really were innorant and poverty stricken, but it's wong to say he first brought them the Gospel. They had their own Methodist churches through this country many years before Mr. Gay's time."

Air. Gay did not appear to enjoy the things that the basket makers said about him. He said that the cothing was sent him for the hasket makers by charitable people, but hat he hasket in encouraging ideas of beggars and dependence. The money that he got for the laskets he said, he turned into the general charity fund of the "House of the Good *hep-hard." Then he described glowings the

way the basket makers flocked to his house at Christmas, sometimes walking ten or fifteen miles, and ate big Christmas dinners and carried off warm clothing and blankets. The town people mostly spoke very kindly of Mr. Gay, praising his fidelity to the three little Episcopal churches under his charge, and his kindness to the poor. If he was horribly in debt he was only to be pitted for it.

The hotographs which accompany this will enable the render to picture with some couracy the manner of life upon the mountains. The houses are almost all built of logs. Occasionally one will be found of frame, and sometimes a log house boarded over. The Sux reporter found a good deal of poverty in the mountains but nothing to warrant the stories that the people were semi-savage, or in danger of freezing and starving. Near Little Long Pond, a tiny body of water in the middle of the region, noted locally for its good ilshing, there is uite a gathering of basket makers. Near here the reporter entered a tiny frame but. It was scarcely big enough to hold the scanty furniture, which consisted of a cooking stove, double bed, small table, and three broken chairs. A bright fire blazed in the stove, It was the only cheerful feature of the place, but an element of good cheer which can be had anywhere on the mountains for the trouble of getting it, for wood is plentiful and free. On the table was what was left of the morning meal, a few cold buckwheat cakes. In this diminutive house were a man and two little children. The man was tall and slender. He had a rich brown beard and a face little short



THE HOUSE ON THE ROCKS.

of handsome. He was dressed very poorly, his trousers showed rents and long tears not withstanding that the weather was extremely cold, and his shirt and ragged coat were not much warmer. He was working hard on some red and white fruit backets. Half a dozen of them lay on the floor all done but the handles. Opposite him on a single chair were seated the two little children, both girls. The little ones had their heads together, and were nodding sleepily at the blazing logs. The backet maker invited the visitor to draw a chair close to the fire. He did not stop his work.

I hope you'll excuse the looks of things." said he, "but you see I haven't any woman around to keep things slicked up for me. I've got to do it all myself. That's why I've got to stick to basket making. I'd rather go into the woods and chop wood, but if I did who would look after the little ones, ch? I tried biring a woman to come to the bouse and care for 'em, but I found it took about all my wages, so I thought I might tester stay at home myself and make baskets.

"Well, you can judge for yourself," replied the man. "I've done these six this morning, and I'll de eight more before I lay off for the night, and I get \$1.25 a dozen for 'em."

"Dor't you find it rather small quarters here?" asked the reporter.

"Well, is unpose you'd find it pratty hard doing he a but him a the way we live round this part. We re used 'o't."

This man was Jesse Johnston, one of the heat-known basket makers in the Little Long Pond neighborhood. His home was very much like the rest, except that the log houses were warmer, and that the houses where there were warmer, and the same are promised in the law harder and him a poor moon, for houses don't cost anythin



without room to swing a Door.

climb inside. When he wanted to close the door he pushed it up into place from inside and propped it with a sitck. The family occupied the house in this condition for some years.

The cave house that has been spoken of frequently is merely a hole in a hillside with the front boarded over and a door ent in it. It is very warm and comfortable, but dirty and primitive in the extreme. It reminds one of the burrow of some animal. But the whole mountain country is ashumed of this habitation and the idle follow who lives there, neither of which is in any sense representative. An interesting old house, now deserted, is pointed out as the place where Bishop Potter once confirmed. This was years ago, before the days of St. John's Mission. Mr. Gay turned the log shanty into a chared and had services there. Many of the basket makers are quite prosperous. You will find the log shanty surrounded by quite a girden, and another log edifice near by which the proprietor dignifies by the name of a stable. In it is a horse or a cow, or maybe both. A rough pig sty, now empty, bespeaks the existence of a winter's supply of nork and sausage. In it is a horse or a cow, or maybe both. A rough pig sty, now empty, bespeaks the existence of a winter's supply of nork and sausage. In some of the log houses there are clumsy looms at which the thrifty housewife weaves rag carpeting and rough, heavy textures, Every mountain man is a crack shot and the wild hills abound in such small game as rabbits, quall, and the like.

It is on Sunday when the mountains bloom and blossom as the rose. It is the gain day of the week. If the weather is fine every little country church is the gathering place of people of every condition, who have walked



WHERE BISHOP POTTER CONSTRMED.

where bishop potter convision.

miles, more for the cleasure of goods than worship, it is true, but we a post to worship, it is true, but we a post to worship, it is true, but we a post to worship earnestly all the same. The Mechodism that flourishes on those steep hills lies is of the cleasure of the mechodism of to day all over this land. The preachers are supplies, who cover four or five churches each but the brothen can make noise enough the actives to make noise enough the actives to make no for any lack of ministerial true. Stocker Conkins who down in the result of the first hard with the second of the control of the contr

Communion in this city is the rector of the church. He is rarely there, of course, but Deacon John Burras leads the congregation through the full choral services each Sinday. These Sunday gatherings surprise you in several ways. Taken together, the people look even more intelligent and well favored than you thought. Then you are astonishe at the good-looking women you see. Bright eyes fresh, pretty faces, the redde tof cheeks, and sturdy, but shapely figures—these are the universal characteristics of the wives and daughters of the mountain men. You rub you result and say that not many country he ghormode can turn out so many altogether wholesomer looking women of Sundays as this.

THE OLD MAN'S RAD NIGHT. But He Finally Talked His Way to Eac.

ferty's with Coin for Whiskey. A very seedy, white-halfed miserable-look ing man went skurrying round the corner of Twenty-first street and Sixth avenue before an icy wind the other evening and after getting under the lee of the big back building paused to look around him. He found himself unexpectedly alongside a young man in a furlined overcont, who was waiting for a horse car "Good evening, boss," said the old man, "It's pretty cold and I haven't the price of a

whiskey. My luck to-day has been fearful. I haven't picked up a nickel The young man in the fur cont was a careful student of human nature, and a ways made & practice of questioning a broken-down side-

The young man in the fur can was cased at student of human nature, and aways made a practice of questioning a broken-down side-walk worker whenever he ame across one.

"I don't suppose peop are generous, said he, "just after the holdars, hor leggars must have a pretty hard time of it."

"Well," replied the old man, "I don't beg very often, It's only when I can't do any busseness, and hight finds m, dead broke, that I strike anybody for a same.

"What's your business," asked the young man in the fur coal.

"I'll tell you, was the rerly." During the rush hours on the coare i road I go up into a crowded station and inger round just outside the entrance where the people put their tickets. There is such a bustle and hinry that he one notices me, or if I am noticed to be not of the wind, well, I simply watch the crowled near the window. We lime is when a Harlam train polls into the station and in, pope buying testing the gate, I made than likely lind a pick for another about in the ratio to get out of the wind, well, I simply watch the crowled near the window. We time is when a Harlam train polls into the station, and harpope buying testing the gate, I made than likely lind a pick for another about in the ratio to get out of the window when the gate, I made than likely lind a pick of all of single the gate, I made than likely lind a pick of all of single the gate, I made than likely lind a pick of all of single the party it does belong to be supplied to know what good use my considered the listingers. You see my considered the listingers. All that is necessary to be showed a light of single the listing the strategy of single the single that good the form of the listing the list of single that it is pred a dole in the listing the single that it is not the surprise of the full of the single single that the condition of the ratio of all of single that it is shed a single half of the single single the single single lists and a single the single lists and a single the single lists and a single the single lists and a singl

Hasseeb Reen Rof Dames us who recently are rived by way of the Barge Oilles, hat charge of

rived by way of the Barge office, hat charge of an Arabian exhibit at the Centennial display in Priladennia and also at the Paris Prosiden. He proposes to make an e-hit at the coming World at a rich tending the rich tendent in the state of the state of

Greensto, Jan 11 .- tu t' W. 'sworth has two-ther's beam unto red duch me out to the mount I had been The anount I had been The anount I had been to the two the another to the most to a little most \$1,000. Herbert to adsworth of Acon makes a requestion of two-therds.